

## Introduction

The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission provides planning and technical support to its members. Member jurisdictions include the counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, and Roanoke; the cities of Covington, Roanoke and Salem; and the towns of Iron Gate, Fincastle, Troutville, Buchanan, New Castle and Vinton. Since the publication of the 2002 *Virginia Outdoors Plan*, there have been changes to the membership of Region 5. Clifton Forge, which was previously a city, changed status and is included with Alleghany County for statistical information. The other change is that Franklin County has become a member of Region 5, while maintaining its membership with Region 12. For the purposes of this plan, all statistical information for Franklin County is included in the Region 12 chapter.

Stretching from the Blue Ridge Mountains across the Shenandoah Valley to the valley and ridge province of the Appalachian Mountains, Region 5 is a mixture of urban centers and rural farms and forests. Suburban sprawl in Region 5 is adding more pressure to public services, though its growth rate is relatively small. Marked by topographic variety, numerous rivers, streams, and many notable cultural and historic sites, the area offers a full range of historic and outdoor experiences. Whether hiking the Appalachian Trail or driving the Blue Ridge Parkway, exploring the George Washington and Jefferson (GW-Jeff) National Forests or paddling the James River, the outdoor enthusiast's choices of activities are many.

The Blue Ridge Parkway, with its millions of visitors annually, is a cornerstone for state and regional tourism and development of economic initiatives. In 2006, the Blue Ridge Parkway had a slight rise in attendance contributing to larger revenues from tourist dollars along its entire length. Regional and local open space, recreational and educational programs reflect and rely upon the quality of the Blue Ridge Parkway experience. There is a need to develop appropriate and acceptable protection techniques for property adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway and other recreational resources in the region. Roanoke County has worked with the Blue Ridge Parkway to develop a viewshed analysis and is pursuing new viewshed easements.

The region's growth rate has slowed in the last several years to a moderate rate. The projected growth rate

between 2000 and 2005 is 1.5 percent. Future growth is anticipated to be steady, with the population in Region 5 projected to increase 5.4 percent to 278,800 in 2020 from its 2000 population level of 264,541. All of the localities will be gaining in population, except for Alleghany County, which is expected to reduce its population by a rate of 7 percent. Region 5 has some diversity in its population. However, the projected increase in minorities is less than the state overall.

Recommendations applicable to all regions are found in chapters III through IX. To meet needs established in the 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)*, it is important to integrate these recommendations with those that follow for Region 5 into regional and local planning and development strategies.

## Outdoor recreation

For a general discussion of outdoor recreation trends, issues and planning considerations in Virginia, see Chapter II: Outdoor Recreation Issues, Trends and Survey Findings, and Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Planning and Related Issues.

Based on the findings of the 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey (VOS)*, the top 10 most popular outdoor activities in Region 5 are walking for pleasure, driving for pleasure, swimming, visiting historic sites, visiting natural areas, fishing, sunbathing and beach use, camping, picnicking and using a playground. There is a need for trails close to home, including walking, jogging, running and hiking. Participation rates for hunting have increased in Region 5, while statewide, hunting participation has decreased. Two of the top outdoor recreation activities in Region 5 are water related; however there has been a decline in sailing and other lake and stream activities since 2002.

The Demand, Supply and Needs Analysis for Region 5 compares the existing supply of outdoor recreation facilities in the region with the demand measured by the 2006 *VOS* to assess the need for the region. The needs are then projected out to the year 2020 using population projections. Activity days for many of the activities have dropped since the 2002 *VOS* leaving an excess supply of facilities for many activities, especially hunting acres, hiking-backpacking trails and horseback riding trails. The surplus supply of

outdoor recreation facilities attracts users from other areas of the state, thereby enhancing the economic opportunities for the region (see Table X-5).

In Region 5, all of the localities, except for Craig County, are served by a parks and recreation department. Craig County does not have a Youth and Recreation Association that is working hard to fill the needs for recreation there. According to the *Commonwealth of Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, Comparative Report on Local Government Revenues and Expenditures* (year ended June 30, 2005), the Region 5 departments serve its citizens with an average per capita spending of \$78.81. The per capita spending in 2006 on parks and recreation for each locality in Region 5 was: City of Covington, \$160.58; City of Salem, \$154.45; Alleghany County, \$51.86; Roanoke County, \$40.59; Roanoke City, \$35.43; and Botetourt County, \$29.93. Craig County was not listed in the report. This compares to a statewide per capita spending on parks and recreation of \$60.10, including \$76.51 from cities and \$43.75 from counties.

As mentioned above, Craig County does not have a parks and recreation department. The County Youth and Services, Inc., a private nonprofit partner with the Craig County Recreation and Conservation Association, provides guidance and leadership for enhancing the opportunities for county youth and families to recreate and preserve the natural resources. Their work includes acquiring and developing land for team sports and passive recreation activities. They also organize and manage youth and adult programs since there is no government entity in the county to serve this function.

### **Land conservation**

A detailed discussion on statewide awareness of the need for conservation of farmland, parks, natural areas, and historical and cultural resources is found in Chapter III: Land Conservation. Land conservation recommendations include:

- Localities that lie within the viewshed of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) should work to protect scenic views and adjacent lands. The National Park Service has viewshed management and landscape design guidelines for viewshed protection.
- Large blocks of public lands provide much of the open space in Region 5. There are tracts of federal land holdings, including the GW-Jeff National Forests, the AT and the Blue Ridge Parkway. State resources also provide open space in Region 5,

including natural area preserves, state wildlife management areas and state forests. Protection of the scenic value of the lands adjacent to these public lands should be pursued by agencies managing the properties.

### **Land Trusts and Conservation Programs Operating in Region 5:**

- Appalachian Trail Conservancy
- APVA Preservation Virginia
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Civil War Preservation Trust
- Department of Historic Resources
- James River Association
- Piedmont Environmental Council
- The 500-Year Forest Foundation
- The Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- Valley Conservation Council
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation
- Western Virginia Land Trust

### **Green infrastructure**

Information about green infrastructure is found in Chapter IV: Green Infrastructure. Regional recommendations for green infrastructure include:

- Regional and local organizations should become informed and educate constituents about green infrastructure planning, including guidance on local zoning initiatives for changing community design and transportation systems.
- Regional and local organizations should continue to acquire and protect land along the Roanoke River corridor for development of a continuous greenway and to provide public access.

### **Programs**

The following recommendations integrate statewide program initiatives into responsive regional strategies for outdoor recreation and conservation. The statewide program areas addressed in this section include: trails and greenways, blueways and water access, historic and landscape resources, scenic resources, scenic highways and Virginia byways, scenic rivers, watersheds, environmental and land stewardship education, and the private sector. Recommendations are bulleted or numbered and are not sequenced by state or local priorities. Numbered recommendations are site specific to the regional map at the end of this section.

## Trails and greenways

For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiatives, Greenways and Trails.

- Many railroad corridors have been or will be abandoned, which provides valuable corridors for multi-use trails. Regional and local organizations should partner to use these corridors for trails and greenways.
- Region 5 localities have developed the *Roanoke Valley Greenway Plan*, a regional bicycle-pedestrian plan. All localities should participate in the implementation of this plan. This plan outlines and prioritizes biking and walking trails needed in the region and includes Franklin County. Envisioned as a comprehensive network of off-road trails, the plan will be developed in coordination with road improvements, land development projects, and other local and regional project initiatives. Appropriate lands along the Roanoke River should be considered as potential right-of-way for the Roanoke River Greenway. The plan contains secondary trails that connect the regional greenways to Carvins Cove Natural Reserve network, Mill Mountain network, Wolf Creek, Glade Creek, Murray Run, Explore Park, the AT and the Blue Ridge Parkway. These secondary trails should be considered local priorities in meeting the greenway network goals. Development of the Roanoke Greenway connection from Ellett Valley to Explore Park should also be a priority.
- Regional and local organizations should develop the Taylor Property as a passive park linking other public lands as part of the Roanoke Greenway.
- Regional and local organizations should develop the Perimeter Greenway Trail for equestrians and others to connect Spring Hollow Reservoir, Green Hill Park, Havens Wildlife Management Area, Carvins Cove, Greenfields, GW-Jeff National Forests, Explore Park, Blue Ridge Parkway and Bent Mountain. This trail would connect to the developing Greenfield Recreation Park in Botetourt County.
- Regional and local organizations should develop more trails that are multi-use, including horse trails where appropriate.
- Regional and local organizations should consider the conversion of abandoned railroad beds into trails.

- The Blue Ridge Parkway and GW-Jeff National Forests staff should continue working with horse enthusiasts and regional government units to complete the equestrian trail between Roanoke and Lexington. The trail will connect the equine center near Lexington with trail resources in the national forests. Completion of the trail will provide a venue for national events, as well as regional and state needs. An equestrian loop trail incorporated into it using the GW-Jeff National Forests, Fenwick Mines Recreation Area trailhead, the C&O right-of-way connecting to the Craig Creek Campground should be considered.

### Statewide trunkline trails

- 1 The **Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT)** was designated by Congress and is managed by the National Park Service. The AT traverses Region 5 from the crest of the Blue Ridge at the eastern most section of the region to its southwestern corner. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) has member clubs that voluntarily work with federal, state and local governments, and numerous individual landowners to solve problems associated with the acquisition, development, administration, management and maintenance of the AT. Local and regional partnerships with the AT and ATC should continue to protect the setting and viewsheds along the AT preserving this outdoor recreational experience and reputation as a footpath in the wilderness.
- 2 Regional and local organizations should complete development of the **Great Eastern Trail** through the Allegheny Mountains. The Great Eastern Trail will link existing trails from central Alabama to central New York along the Allegheny Highlands. The proposed Allegheny Trail, a section of the Great Eastern Trail, traverses the Craig County-West Virginia line, cutting across the southwest corner of Allegheny County before entering West Virginia. Portions of the trail have been constructed, and it is nearly complete in West Virginia. At several points along its course, the trail will connect with the AT.
- 3 The **Trans-Virginia Southern Trail** will stretch from Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay. Comprised of many trails existing or underway, this network will connect the mountains to the sea and stimulate ecotourism across Southern Virginia. Regional and local organizations should encourage this trail to be constructed in the Roanoke Valley by connecting Montgomery, Roanoke, Franklin and Floyd counties with the trail in Patrick County.

4 The **Blue Ridge Parkway** should continue working with Roanoke Valley Greenways Commission, the City of Roanoke and local partners to connect parkway trails with the regional greenway system and to continue development of parallel trails.

#### Other trails

5 Regional and local organizations should develop the **Hanging Rock-Masons Creek** trail to connect Catawba Valley with the Roanoke River.

6 Regional and local organizations should develop the **Tinker Creek- Carvin Creek** trail to connect Carvin Cove with the **Roanoke Valley Greenways** and eventually the Appalachian Trail.

7 Regional and local organizations should support plans for the **Jackson River Scenic Trail** from Covington to Lake Moomaw and on into Region 6. The Jackson River Trail would be located on an old rail corridor extending from Intervale to the confluence of the Jackson River and Cedar Creek. This corridor could be a greenway-blueway that would extend through Covington to Iron Gate, connecting downtown (Main Street), Fort Young Park and Jackson River Park in South Covington. This could then connect to the James River blueway.

8 Regional and local organizations should support development of equestrian trails in the region including the **Alleghany Highlands Horse Trail**. This is a 45-mile system that connects trails in George Washington National Forest in Alleghany and Bath counties with trails in Douthat State Park.

9 Regional and local organizations should continue efforts to secure easements for public access along the **Craig Valley Scenic Trail**, a C&O rails-to-trails project connecting New Castle in Craig County to Eagle Rock in Botetourt County.

10 Regional and local organizations should develop a greenway along the 48-mile long **Valley Rail-Trinkle Trail**, a part of the **Roanoke Lexington Horse Trail**, connecting the Hollins University area of Roanoke County to Lexington, Virginia. Portions of the property will be donated in fee simple to the Western Virginia Land Trust.

11 Regional and local organizations should develop the **Vinton Business Center Trail**, which will provide a link to the Blue Ridge Parkway and Explore Park.

#### Water access and blueways

A discussion of the water access in the Commonwealth can be found in Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Water Access and Blueways. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should establish cooperative agreements among localities, other agencies and private landowners to meet the increasing need for public access to recreational waters.
  - Regional and local agencies should identify strategies to make additional waterfront resources available for public use.
  - Regional and local agencies should provide adequate support facilities and services, such as restrooms, concessions, parking and maintenance for existing and proposed public water and beach access areas.
  - Regional and local agencies should acquire or maintain access to existing public beaches and water access sites that may be jeopardized by changes in land use or development activities.
- 12 Regional and local organizations should develop the **Roanoke River Greenway and Blueway** along the Roanoke River from Spring Hollow to Explore Park. Roanoke City plans to initiate a linear park planning process for the full length of the river in FY 2008-09. The linear park should enhance motorized and non-motorized boating access on the Roanoke River to include appropriate portages around dams and other river obstacles. The project will also expand recreational facilities and public access opportunities by integrating these into the design and construction of the proposed River Flood Reduction Project.
- 13 Local governments and recreational organizations should work with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the James River Association to develop an **Upper James River Blueway**, part of the **James River Heritage Trail**, beginning at Iron Gate to join the middle and lower James River blueways. As part of this effort, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) should cooperate to finalize and implement plans to acquire and develop a series of boating and fishing access sites and canoe campsites along the upper James River. For a trail to be functional, additional public access is needed on the river between Eagle Rock and Snowden, and between Lynchburg and Bent Creek.

- 14 Regional and local organizations should implement development of the **Jackson River** blueway from Lake Moomaw in Alleghany County to the James River at Iron Gate. Where appropriate, portages should be created around dams and other river obstacles.
- 15 Regional and local organizations should provide public water access on **Johns Creek** above New Castle.
- 16 Regional and local organizations should provide public water access on **Craig Creek** between New Castle and Strom.
- 17 The USFS, working with localities, should provide water-based recreational facilities and expanded public access for **Lake Moomaw**.
- 18 Regional and local organizations should improve portage and access at the **Niagara Dam** on the Roanoke (Staunton) River, or remove the dam.
- 19 Regional and local organizations should develop a public boat landing at the **Craig County Youth and Recreation Association (CCR&CA) property** at Routes 615 and 614.

### Historic and landscape resources

The history of the Roanoke Valley–Alleghany region is a long and proud one. The vestiges of it are evident in the downtowns and throughout the countryside. Once the hub of travel and commerce, Roanoke is re-establishing itself as a destination point based on its rich history. Whether one looks to the agrarian landscape, the industrial centers or developed historic places, the protection of these sites is critical to the economic vitality of the region.

Consideration should be given to evaluating potential historic and landscape recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Historic and Landscape Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should identify historic and archaeological resources that can be used for tourism, recreation and education. These resources should be included in local land use planning and decision-making processes to promote preservation and protection.
- Regional and local agencies should build local historic attractions, historical societies, museums and other tourism organizations in the region to include

the Virginia Association of Museums, Virginia Civil War Trails, APVA Preservation Virginia, the Virginia Main Street Program and others to enhance local heritage tourism, educational and recreational offerings.

- Regional and local agencies should encourage local governments and private organizations that own historic properties in the region to manage properties effectively for long-term protection and to maximize public benefit consistent with the nature of the historic property.
- Regional and local agencies should recognize the multiple historic and cultural resources within the rural landscape through rural historic districts.
- Regional and local agencies should support the creation of other heritage area programs to promote tourism and preservation in distinctive regions.
- DCR and local governments should extend the Hunter's Raid Civil War Trail from the existing section in Botetourt County to Craig County.
- There is a critical need for a county-wide survey of the historic and architectural resources of Craig County and for a city-wide survey of the historic and architectural resources of the City of Salem.
- 20 State, regional and local organizations should designate appropriate areas within **Catawba Valley** as a historic district.
- 21 State, regional and local organizations should identify a continuous corridor for the historic **Valley Road**, Route 11 or alternative routes, and designate it as a Virginia Scenic Byway or historic road.

### Scenic resources

Consideration should be given to potential scenic recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should develop corridor management plans for scenic byways, blueways, greenways and scenic rivers to assure preservation of the scenic quality of the corridor.
- Regional and local agencies should protect the scenic value of lands adjacent to publicly owned properties, as well as the scenic value of working agricultural and forestal areas key to maintaining a sense of place and economic vitality of the region. Scenic attributes to be considered include:
  - Encourage development away from mountaintops to protect significant vistas.

- Consider timber harvesting impacts on key viewsheds.
  - Protect viewsheds along river corridors and scenic byways.
  - Create scenic overlooks and vista cuts along Virginia byways and scenic highways to enhance the visual experience of traveling.
  - Consideration should be given by local governments to develop ridgeline ordinances that would preserve open space and protect recreational lands.
  - Regional and local agencies should implement protection of viewsheds of the Blue Ridge Parkway identified in the study by the National Park Service. Comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances should be developed to ensure that the intrinsic value of the Blue Ridge Parkway and its viewsheds are conserved.
  - The Roanoke AT Club should continue to work with localities to protect the viewsheds along the AT. ATC's focus is on the viewshed of Catawba Valley from the AT.
  - Regional and local organizations should protect the scenic aspects of Interstate 81, as it is recognized by the American Automobile Association and other groups as a scenic highway and acts as an attractive gateway to the state.
- 22 Regional and local organizations should protect the viewshed in Roanoke County from **Lynville Mountain** in Franklin County.
- 23 Localities should collaborate with USFS to protect the corridor and viewsheds of the USFS **Highland Scenic Road**.
- 24 Regional and local agencies should implement the protective resource management zone as outlined in the **Mill Mountain Plan**.
- 25 Regional and local agencies should protect the viewshed of **Purgatory Mountain** as seen from Buchanan.

### Scenic highways and Virginia byways

Opportunities to traverse Virginia's scenic and cultural landscapes are enhanced through state and nationally recognized designation. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways.

On Sept. 22, 2005, national byway designations were given to four Virginia roads. The Blue Ridge Parkway,

a portion of which is located in the eastern part of Region 5, was given the highest designation as an All-American Road. The designation allows localities along the routes to access federal dollars for byway corridor projects (see Chapter VI: Grant Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation, Open Space and Conservation). These major scenic highways attract tourists from throughout the nation, as well as international visitors. The character of the Blue Ridge Parkway has been altered from that of a pastoral scene, to landscapes that are sometimes marked by incompatible development. Overlooks that once featured breathtaking vistas of farmsteads or forest, now reveal factories and exploding suburban residential development. In some cases, subdivisions are within a few hundred feet of the magnificent corridor, and as development continues, there will be additional impacts on the quality of the visitor experience.

Scenic roads recommendations for the region include:

- Development of a Virginia Karst Trail is recommended to help educate the public about karst resources in the Commonwealth. This thematic trail will promote resource management goals and best management practices that help landowners protect sensitive karst resources such as caves, springs and sinkholes. The trail will focus on above ground features and tourist caves throughout the state's valley and ridge physiographic province. The Virginia Karst Trail, endorsed by the Virginia Region of the National Speleological Society and the Virginia Cave Board, will benefit the state through increased educational, commercial and tourism opportunities.
- Regional and local agencies should recognize and nominate scenic roads for designation as Virginia byways.
- Regional and local agencies should partner with other state, local and professional organizations to develop corridor management plans to protect the scenic assets of byway corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should incorporate Virginia byways and scenic highways into local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to ensure viewsheds are conserved and the sense of place retained along these corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should support designation of nationally qualified historic corridors to increase civic engagement and foster heritage tourism.
- Federal, state, regional and local agencies should preserve the inherent qualities of scenic road corridors as attractive and welcoming communities,

especially gateway communities to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

- A James River Byway should be developed consisting of roads that closely parallel the James River Bateau Festival route.

The following road segments have been recommended for consideration as Virginia Byways:

**26** **Route 220** in Alleghany County from Covington to the Bath County-Alleghany County line, and in Botetourt County from Clifton Forge to Route 615.

**27** **Route 269** from Clifton Forge, to and including Route 770, to its intersection with Route 251 in Rockbridge County.

**28** **Route 606** in Botetourt and Craig counties, from Fincastle in Botetourt County to the intersection with Route 615 at Given in Craig County.

**29** Designate the historic **Valley Road**, Route 11 or alternative routes, as a Virginia Scenic Byway.

### Scenic rivers

For detailed information about the Virginia's Scenic Rivers Program and its purpose, benefits and designation process, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiative, Scenic Rivers. Regional and local recommendations include:

- Localities should adopt planning tools (e.g., land use overlays, corridor management plans) that will afford special recognition and protection to Virginia's scenic rivers.

The following river segments are potential Virginia scenic rivers and should be evaluated to determine suitability for designation:

In Region 5, a section of the James River from Eagle Rock to Springwood is the only designated scenic river segment.

**30** The **Roanoke River** beginning in Montgomery County from the Camp Altamons area to Smith Mountain Lake.

**31** Additional sections of the **James River** from Springwood to the Botetourt County-Rockbridge County line.

**32** **Johns Creek** in Craig County from Craig Springs to New Castle.

**33** **Craig Creek** in Craig County from the Montgomery County-Craig County line to the Town of New Castle and Botetourt County.

In order to more successfully protect river resources, the following recommendations are given:

- The Forest Service has undertaken an assessment of the rivers in the GW-Jeff National Forests to determine whether any are eligible for national recognition as Wild, Scenic or Recreation rivers. Eligible rivers should be nominated for designation.

### Watershed resources

Region 5 is on the continental divide between the New River watershed, which flows to the Mississippi River, and the James River watershed, which flows to the Chesapeake Bay. Karst topography, which covers much of the region, creates special issues and considerations for water quality and quantity in the region. For information about Virginia's watershed programs, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Virginia's Watershed Programs.

#### Watershed groups in Region 5

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Friends of the Roanoke
- James River Association
- Roanoke River Basin Association
- Upper James River Roundtable (UJRR) aka the Mountain Waters Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)
- Upper Roanoke River Roundtable
- Valley Conservation Council
- Virginia Conservation Network
- Woods Creek

Watershed recommendations for this region include:

- Regional and local governments should protect the management of watersheds by integrating watershed management planning with local land use ordinances and comprehensive plans.
- 34** Regional and local agencies should protect the headwaters of the **Roanoke River**.
- 35** Regional and local agencies should develop and implement the resource management plan for **Carvins Cove Resource Management Area**.

## Environmental and land stewardship education

For detailed information on Environmental and Land Stewardship education, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Environmental and Land Stewardship Education. Environmental and land stewardship recommendations for this region include:

- Local organizations should continue to support and develop the outdoor education program of the Roanoke City Parks and Recreation Department.
- State, regional and local agencies should support development of the vision for a Roanoke River Center. The center will provide environmental education programs focusing on conservation, the Roanoke River and related topics and activities.

**36** State, regional and local agencies should continue to support and develop the **Mill Mountain Discovery Center** and its programs. The center offers programs and events that focus on outdoor education and cultural awareness, Mill Mountain's geology, wild flora and fauna, cultural history, and past and present recreational opportunities.

## Federal programs

For information on federal programs affecting Virginia's outdoor recreation and conservation opportunities, see Chapter IX-A: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency.

## National parks

- Local and regional government, user groups and nonprofits should work with NPS to revise policy that allows mountain bikes to use appropriate national park trails.

**37** The National Park Service should work with local governments to support efforts along the **Blue Ridge Parkway** encouraging adjacent landowners, localities and planning district commissions to develop a scenic overlay zone adjacent to and within the viewshed of the parkway as part of a multi-regional parkway viewshed planning process.

## National forests

USFS should:

- Continue to develop new partnerships to market recreational opportunities and rural economic development through tourism. USFS could work with DCR, Blue Ridge Travel Association of Virginia, Shenandoah Valley Tourism Association and the Virginia Tourism Corporation to develop regional and international

marketing strategies to showcase Virginia's outdoor recreation opportunities.

- The GW-Jeff National Forests should continue to partner with the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau and other area chambers of commerce to encourage tourism in this area.
- Continue to place program emphasis on areas designated by Congress such as the AT, Mount Pleasant Scenic Area and wilderness areas.

## State facilities and programs

For a discussion of state facilities and programs throughout the entire Commonwealth, see Chapter IX-B: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency or program.

## State parks

**38** **Douthat State Park** (4,552 acres) is located in Allegheny and Bath counties and bordered by national forest lands. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Douthat is one of the original six Virginia state parks opened in June 1936. The park offers picnicking and three shelters, three campgrounds, a group camp, cabins, two family lodges, restaurant, camp store, and more than 40 miles of hiking and biking trails. The 50-acre lake supports swimming, fishing and non-motorized boating. The lake and Wilson Creek are stocked seasonally with trout in cooperation with DGIF. Natural and cultural programs are offered each day through the summer season and on weekends in the spring and fall. Educational programs are offered at the park during the school year and are available to local youth and civic groups. Staff members also take outreach programs to schools in the surrounding six-county area. The Douthat State Park Environmental Education Group has been working with the park to generate funds for an environmental education center collocated with the visitor center.

Through the 2002 General Obligation Bond (GOB), funds were allocated for the acquisition of additional land in Allegheny County, the construction of an equestrian campground and additional cabins. The park is an integral component of the Allegheny Highlands Horse Trail. Additional opportunities exist for cooperative trail projects between the park and national forest.

**39** **Fallings Springs Wayside** (28 acres), located in western Allegheny County, was acquired in part through donation to DCR. The property is managed through an agreement with the Izaak Walton League

and maintained by the Department of Transportation. DCR should improve the public recreation offerings at this site.

### State natural area preserves

Natural area preserves within the Region 5 are Johnson Creek in Alleghany County and Poor Mountain in Roanoke County. DCR has, as of November 2006, documented 415 occurrences of 125 rare species and natural communities in the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Region. Sixty-one species are globally rare and six are federally threatened or endangered. One hundred twenty-seven conservation sites have been identified in the district; 90 (71 percent) have received some level of protection through ownership or management by state, federal and non-government organizations. However, only 25 sites are protected well enough to ensure the long-term viability of the rare species and natural communities they support.

DCR recommends that all unprotected conservation sites, and all unprotected portions of partially protected sites, be targeted for future land conservation efforts. The appropriate method of protection will vary with each site, but may include placing the site on Virginia's Registry of Natural Areas, developing a voluntary management agreement with the landowner, securing a conservation easement through a local land trust, acquiring the site through a locality or local land trust, dedicating the site as a natural area preserve with the current owner, or acquiring the site as a state-owned natural area preserve.

Within Region 5, DCR is particularly interested in protecting:

- Water quality for globally rare aquatic communities.
- Significant caves and karst areas.
- Significant shale barren communities.
- Significant wetlands in Floyd County.
- Significant terrestrial communities within the city of Roanoke's municipal watershed areas.

40 DCR should protect additional lands around **Poor Mountain Natural Area Preserve** and complete implementation of access and trails, including one to Happy Hollow Park.

41 DCR should protect additional lands around **Johnson Creek Natural Area Preserve** and complete implementation of access and trails.

42 DCR should continue the cooperative riparian restoration program at **Garst Mill Park**.

### State fish and wildlife management areas (WMA)

- DGIF should continue to work with local and regional governments to support the Birding and Wildlife Trail program.
  - DGIF should continue to investigate opportunities to acquire in-holdings in their WMAs and to improve each area with trails and other structures for wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreation. They should also acquire additional lands wherever feasible to provide additional access for public hunting, fishing and other wildlife viewing recreation.
- 43 DGIF should provide appropriate access to the natural communities within **Havens WMA**.

### State forests

- Local and regional agencies should encourage the use of Department of Forestry (DOF) Best Management Practices in floodplain forest areas, particularly those adjacent to state-designated scenic waterways.
- Local and regional agencies should use DOF properties as field classrooms to help with educational programs.
- Local and regional agencies should coordinate with DOF and seek the assistance of local trail and river user organizations to develop forest trails and publish maps for each state forest, as well as establish greenways and blueways for public use.
- Local and regional agencies should investigate opportunities to acquire fee simple ownership or easements to conserve working farms and forests in the region.
- Local and regional agencies should work with DOF to create defensible space around buildings to reduce the risk of wild fires through the DOF Fire Wise Program.
- Localities should work with DOF on education and monitoring of tree diseases and other pests that could weaken forested environments.
- Agricultural lands should be targeted for reforestation to protect the water quality of the area and limit the effects of erosion.

### Transportation programs

- Local and regional agencies should develop alternatives to the use of private automobiles for daily activ-

ities. Transit systems, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, improved community design, as well as a change in people's attitudes toward transportation alternatives will be needed for the transportation system of the future to meet capacity needs and energy constraints.

- Local and regional agencies should work with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to implement Context Sensitive Solutions that accommodate multiple transportation modes.
- Local and regional agencies should recognize the need for a network of low-speed, low-volume roadways used by equestrians, pedestrians and cyclists, and they should include protections for this network in their comprehensive plan.
- Local and regional agencies should encourage the development of a permanent process for integrating the recommendations of local public health agencies, and they should include "active living" opportunities into all phases of transportation planning, land use planning and project design.
- Regional and local organizations should support and implement the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's adopted *Urban Area Bikeway Plan and the Rural Bikeway Plan*.

**44** VDOT, working with the localities, should enhance and properly identify the Interstate **Bike Route 76**, the Trans-American Bike Route.

**45** VDOT, working with regional and local agencies, should ensure that the widening of **Interstate 81** includes appropriate and adequate AT crossings as necessary.

### Other state lands

For a discussion of other state lands, see Chapter IX-C: Resource Agencies.

The following state-owned lands contain significant undeveloped open space that may have some potential for local recreational use. Each site should be assessed and, where appropriate, a cooperative agreement should be developed to make these resources available for local use as parks and open space.

**46** **Catawba State Hospital** in Roanoke County should be assessed to determine its potential for providing recreational opportunities.

**47** **Dabney Lancaster Community College** in Alleghany County near Clifton Forge has some acres

of undeveloped land that may have potential for recreational use. The site should be assessed and cooperative use agreements developed if appropriate.

### Local and regional parks and recreation departments

The value of local parks as a part of the regional recreation offered in the region is extremely important, as many local parks in the Roanoke Valley region are used for family vacations, sports and athletic tournaments, special events and festivals by visitors from outside the area. Federal, state and local park and recreation facilities all work in tandem to offer a varied and multidimensional outdoor recreation experience.

For a discussion of local and regional parks and recreation departments, see Chapter IX-D: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Explore reclamation of abandoned landfills into new and needed parks.
- Consider cooperative management for the recreational use of private, corporate, state or federally owned lands in order to increase local access and meet outdoor recreation needs.
- Within Region 5, regional agencies should place a high priority on providing recreation opportunities to the Commonwealth's urban population in "close-to home" settings to allow for better access and to avoid overuse of facilities planned for rural populations.
- Craig County should continue to support the continued success of the CCR&CA to provide the necessary conservation and recreation needs for Craig County. A master plan should be developed for parks and recreation in Craig County to prioritize facility and program needs.
- Regional and local organizations should develop additional greenway initiatives through acquisition of additional lands to meet trails, greenways and passive recreation needs.
- Regional and local agencies should implement management and master plans for sites that can be connected to the Roanoke River Greenway and Blueway; including *Carvins Cove Natural Resource Management Plan*, *Mill Mountain Management Plan*, *Roanoke River Natural Resource Management Plan* and Spring Hollow Reservoir. These plans should address public access, including fishing, motorized and non-motorized boating, hiking, picnicking and environmental education.

- Regional and local agencies should consider establishing a new regional park in the vicinity of Poor Mountain and Bent Mountain, southwest of the Roanoke-Salem area.
- Local agencies should establish new parks in the Town of Buchanan and the community of Eagle Rock.
- 48 State, regional and local organizations should explore creation of a “**Headwaters of the James**” park and interpretive center at the confluence of the Jackson and Cowpasture.
- 49 Regional and local organizations should develop and implement a plan for the **Read Mountain** parkland to be managed to promote conservation, provide recreation and protect the top of the mountain, open space resources and critical viewsheds.
- 50 Craig County should develop the **CCR&CA** property at Routes 615 and 614 for active fields, picnicking, playground and courts.
- 51 Local agencies should enhance and supply public facilities at **Mowles Spring Park** in Salem.

### Private sector

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Much of the demand for outdoor recreation is met by the private sector. Because of the abundance of water resources in the region, there are a number of water-based recreational opportunities that could be explored. For a discussion of private sector role, see Chapter IX-E: Resource Agencies.

- An initiative should be developed by regional and local organizations that would support bed and breakfast that preserve their setting by protecting scenic and agricultural land and would promote small business enterprises.
- 52 The potential 50-year lease of Virginia's Explore Park to a private developer creates a need to determine the best management of recreation facilities, interpretive facilities and natural resources, to insure the future viability and availability for public use of this significant property. Partnerships could be developed to protect the resources. Regional and local organization should continue the development and enhancement of Virginia's Explore Park facilities that complement the Blue Ridge Settlement and associated trails.



*Falling Springs Wayside in Alleghany County. Photo by Jennifer Wampler.*

**Table X-5. Region 5 (Roanoke Valley/Allegheny Regional Commission) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs**

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Baseball	348,859	69	fields	119	-50	-46
Basketball	428,145	102	goals	123	-21	-16
Bicycling	376,609	27	miles	NI		
Mountain	62,107	4	miles	NI		
Other	314,502	22	miles	NI		
Lake, river and bay use (combined)	314,502	5,636	water acres	3,846	1,790	2,099
Power boating	149,058	3,593	water acres	S		
Sailing	21,143	183	water acres	S		
Saltwater fishing	74,529	419	water acres	S		
Jet ski, personal watercraft	47,572	745	water acres	S		
Water skiing, towed on water	22,200	696	water acres	S		
Camping	427,616	2,522	sites	749	1,773	1,911
Tent camping	244,465	1,442	sites	296	1,146	1,225
Developed camping	183,151	1,080	sites	453	627	686
Fitness trail use	219,358	18	mile trails	5	13	14
Fields (combined)	449,288	94	fields	127	-33	-27
Football	169,144	36	fields	124	-88	-86
Soccer	280,144	59	fields	3	56	59
Stream use (combined)	990,812	630	stream miles	236	394	428
Freshwater fishing	861,576	606	stream miles	S		
Human-powered boating	46,515	12	stream miles	S		
Rafting	26,429	5	stream miles	S		
Tubing	56,293	7	stream miles	S		
Golfing	334,059	11	courses	252	-3	-2
Hiking, backpacking	416,252	213	trail miles	468	-255	-243
Horseback riding	118,929	51	miles	168	-117	-114
In-line skating	71,357	5	miles	NI		
Jogging, running	1,717,866	138	mile trails	NI		
Nature study, programs	72,679	10	sites	-	10	11

**Note:** Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 Virginia Outdoors Survey as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

**NA:** not applicable, no standard needed

**S:** same as combined

**NS:** not inventoried separately

**NI:** not inventoried

**( - )** indicates surplus

**Table X-5. Region 5 (Roanoke Valley/Allegheny Regional Commission) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs – continued**

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Picnicking away from home	360,752	937	tables	1,095	-158	-107
Skateboarding	200,858	62	sites	NI		
Snow skiing or snowboarding	45,193	1	ski lifts	-	1	1
Softball	375,288	67	fields	79	-12	-9
Sunbathing, relaxing on beach	489,988	35	beach acres	9	26	28
Swimming	2,642,870	178		NI		
Outdoor area	1,326,721	136	beach acres	9	127	134
Outdoor pools	864,218	37	pools	30	7	9
Indoor pools	451,931	5	pools	3	2	2
Tennis	206,144	129	courts	203	-74	-67
Used a playground	710,932	101	sites	146	-45	-39
Visiting gardens	70,300	8	sites	NI		
Visiting historic sites	387,709	33	sites	NI		
Visiting natural areas	493,688	84	sites	NI		
Volleyball	124,215	37	courts	2	35	37
Hunting	848,361	139,122	acres	338,252	-199,130	-191,490
Drive for pleasure	1,752,223	NA	NA	NI		
Driving motorcycle off road	71,357	33	miles	-	33	34
Driving 4-wheel-drive off road	298,644	NA	NA	NS		
Walking for pleasure	5,684,813	NA	NA	NI		
Bird watching	69,772	NA	NA	NI		
Other	153,286	NA	NA	NI		

**Note:** Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 Virginia Outdoors Survey as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

**NA:** not applicable, no standard needed

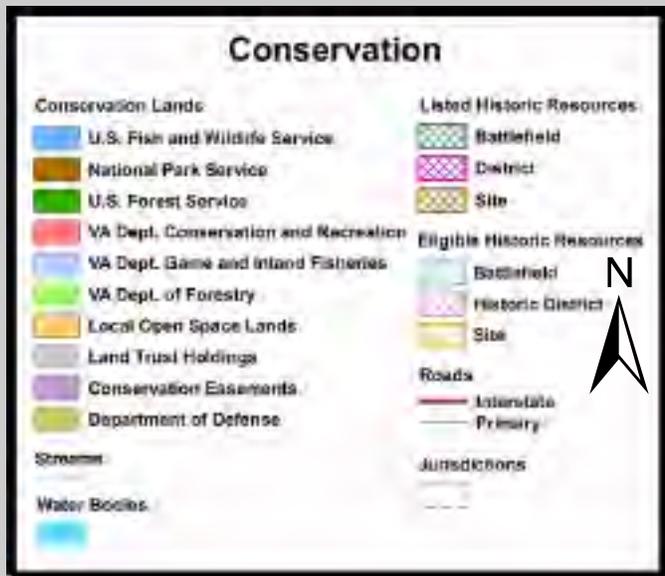
**S:** same as combined

**NS:** not inventoried separately

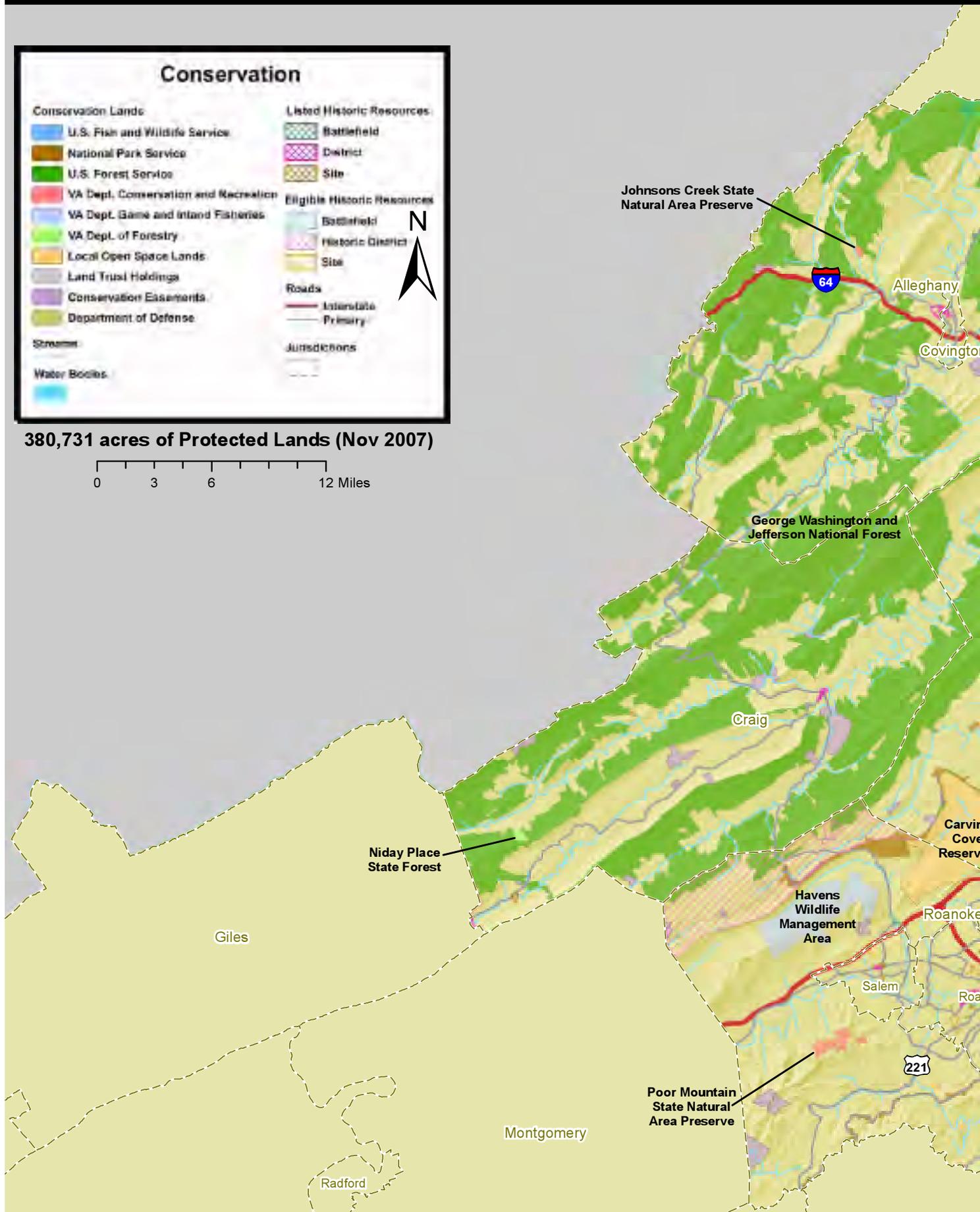
**NI:** not inventoried

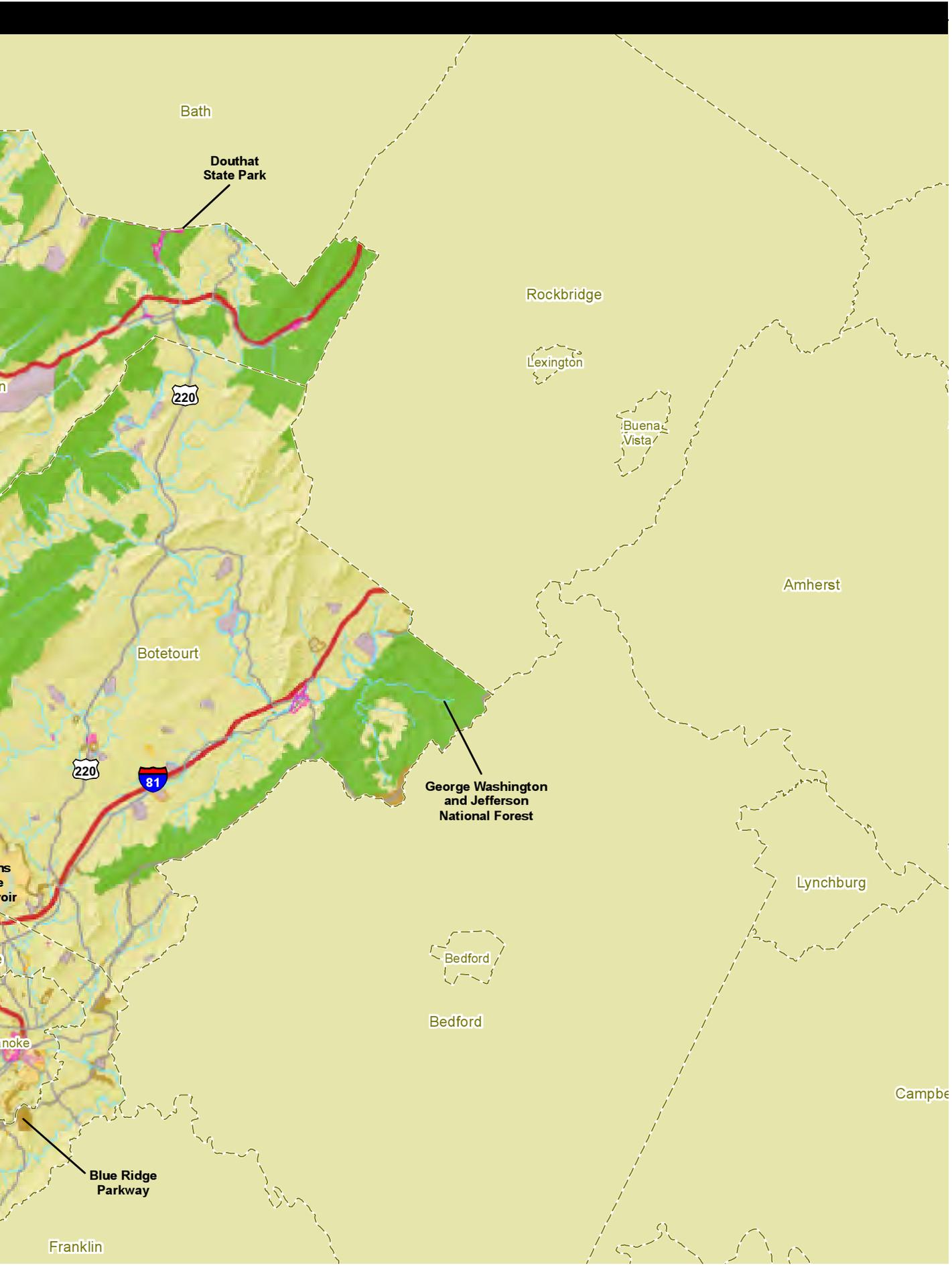
**( - )** indicates surplus

**Map X-10. Region 5 (Roanoke Valley/Allegheny Regional Commission) Conservation Lands**



**380,731 acres of Protected Lands (Nov 2007)**





Map X-11. Region 5 (Roanoke Valley/Allegheny Regional Commission) Outdoor Recreation

